Imagining Nature and Nobility in Law and Literature: *Siete partidas* (Alfonso X), *Libro de la montería* (Alfonso XI) and *Libro de la caza* (Juan Manuel)

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Abstract

The medieval hunt and hunting manuals have been studied by historians as sources for the history of medieval science and geography, and for their insights into the daily lives of the elite societies that practiced hunting as a ritualized sport. This article examines two medieval hunting manuals, Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*, and the *Libro de la montería*, commissioned by King Alfonso XI of Castile, and King Alfonso X's law code, the *Siete partidas*, for their rhetorical and ideological portrayals of hunting and falconry as expressions of aristocratic power and sovereignty over the natural world. The article concludes with a study of an imagined debate between the merits of falconry and hunting with hounds in the *Libro de la caza* and *Libro de la montería* that sheds light on Juan Manuel and Alfonso's competing views on nobility, informed by the political history of war and rebellion that shaped the lives of both men.

Key words: Hunting, Falconry, Alfonso X, Alfonso XI, Juan Manuel, *Libro de la caza*, *Libro de la montería*, *Siete partidas*, Nature, Nobility.

In a 1967 article published in *Speculum* on "The Mediaeval Chase", Marcelle Thiébaux points to the French *Livres du Roy Modus et de La Royne Ratio* as a source for what the author describes as a common *altercatio*: a debate between huntsmen and falconers on the merits of their sport.[1] Also known as *Le jugement de chiens et d'oisiaus*, the debate is a comical, poetic interlude, parodying the classroom exercise of *disputatio*. In the French text, the debate takes place in a tavern, and the opposing parties hurl insults, threats and blows at each other before new rules are set for the debate in which both sides are argued in verse. Much of the poetic trial turns on the question of which of the two senses, seeing or hearing, is more pleasurable. Falconry is associated with visual pleasure, while hunting with hounds is a delight for the ears. The Count of Tanquarville is called to make the final judgment, and he rules in favor of the huntsman. To conclude the debate, Queen Ratio insists that each band bring their quarry for a potluck feast: the falconers bring heron, and the huntsmen deliver the venison.

I outline this debate, briefly, because Thiébaux references, in the same footnote on King Modus, the *Libro de la montería* (1350?) as an example of the same debate (263 n14).[2] In King Alfonso's (Alfonso XI r 1312–1350) hunting manual, there is no fictional

[1] Gunnar Tilander dates the book between 1354 and 1377 (1: xlviii).

[2] The authorship and date of composition of the *Libro de la montería* has been in question since the fifteenth century, but the modern debate began in the second half of the nineteenth when José Amador de los Ríos concluded that Alfonso X, "El Sabio", commissioned the work (555). José Manuel Fradejas Rueda rehearses the history of the

representation of a debate between huntsman and falconers *per se*, but the author does take on the theme, or question, of which sport is more noble and more fitting for princes. As I will argue, this so-called debate on hunting with hounds or falcons, and the books that contain them, are much more than veterinary treatises, land surveys, or milestones in the history of science, as the historian Charles Haskins wrote about them.[3] More than technical writing, they are also ideologically charged discourses of power that project the authority of their authors over land, subjects, and the natural world itself.[4] In the case of

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debate, and argues that the book was produced over time and by multiple authors, beginning with Alfonso X, developed by Alfonso XI, and finished during the reign of Pedro I (300–07).

[3] Haskins includes hunting manuals as examples of a "second phase" in the expansion of knowledge by observation and "the growth of the experimental habit" (vii, 346). Most important among these is *De arte venandi cum avibus* by Emperor Frederick II. According to Haskins, the book "gives the impression of being based far less upon books than upon observation and experience" (320).

[4] Many of the scholars that will be cited here have sensed that hunting as a sport, and the books written about hunting in the Middle Ages, have this ideological feature in common, and as such their work can be grouped into a broad, interdisciplinary approach to literature that has been called "Green" criticism, or "Ecocriticism", because their work, and this essay, read medieval literature "with attention to treatments of nature, land and place" in order to understand "past and present connections between literature and human attitudes regarding the earth", as Rebecca Douglass defines ecocriticism (138). For

the two hunting manuals studied here, Alfonso's *Libro de la montería* and Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*, the paratextual writings, prologues and introductory chapters expose an interdiscursivity that overlaps the language and practices of hunting with competing political ideologies that framed the violent conflicts between Alfonso and Juan Manuel. In order to arrive at this conclusion, a review of Biblical sources, and laws concerning land management from the *Siete partidas*, among other medieval sources on hunting, will show the close ideological associations that hunting shared with the concepts of nobility and sovereignty. These associations become more visible in Alfonso's *Libro de la montería* when we recall the violent history of war and rebellion between Juan Manuel and his king that was concluded only a few years before the composition of the *Libro de la montería*, shortly after Juan Manuel's death in 1348.

A review of the representations of the natural world in the Middle Ages would make a good beginning by recalling the Book of Genesis, for the Biblical foundations of the view of man as Lord of the Earth: "So it was; God made wild animals, cattle, and all reptiles, each according to its kind; and he saw that it was good (Gen 1: 25–26). "Then God said 'Let us make man in our image and likeness to rule the fish in the sea, the birds in heaven, the cattle, all wild animals on earth, and all reptiles that crawl upon the earth.'" (Gen 1: 28). "God blessed them [man and woman] and said to them, 'Be fruitful and

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hispanomedievalists, Connie Scarborough's *Inscribing the Environment: Ecocritical Approaches to Medieval Spanish Literature*, is an excellent contribution to this field, and offers a concise review of ecocritical literature in her introduction (1–5).

increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth.' (Gen 1: 29).

This familiar story of God's creation contains a key concept, even a divine commandment (i.e. "Be fruitful and increase"), that is a source of medieval, and not-so-medieval, attitudes toward nature.[5] Namely, the idea that the natural world is given to man for him, and her, to subdue and rule. In a note to the Oxford Study Edition of the Bible, cited here, the editors explain the meaning of "subdue" in these verses to mean "to be free from nature's tyranny" (2 n28). It is this notion, specifically that humanity must subdue and domesticate the land, and bring the chaos of nature into the order of the ecumene under the sovereign rule of man, that is found in a wide range of medieval art, literature, and law. More than an account of the Creation, Genesis lays the foundation for man's political authority on earth. As William Leiss concludes, Genesis proclaims "the sovereignty of God over the universe" and then defines the "derivative authority of man" to rule over the earth (31). It is because of these themes of power and sovereignty uncovered in the biblical text that the "religious setting in Genesis has always been interpreted in *political* terms [original emphasis]" (Leiss 33), and it is this political reading of man's domination of nature that will resonate in the law codes and hunting manuals examined here. A forceful expression of this approach to land control and

[5] William Leiss's book, cited above, also shows that the religious roots of this view of man as master of the natural world are with us today. More particularly, see Chapter 2, "Mythical, Religious, and Philosophical Roots".

management is also found in the *Siete partidas*, under various *títulos*, but some of the best examples are found in the second *partida*, title 20, laws 1, 6 and 7.

The first *ley* references God's commandment from Genesis, "Acrecentar y aumentar y henchir la tierra fue el primer mandamiento que Dios mandó al primer hombre y mujer después que los hubo hecho" (191), and laws 6 and 7 detail how the land should be subjugated. "Cómo el pueblo se debe de apoderar de la tierra, y enseñorearse de las cosas que hay en ella para acrecentarla" is the title of the sixth law, which cites Genesis again, but it clarifies further, "más aún hay otra cosa que deben hacer los hombres para ser el mandamiento cumplido: y esto es que se apoderen y sepan ser señores de ella [the land]. Y este apoderamiento viene de dos maneras: la una, es por arte, y la otra, por fuerza" (192). The next *ley*, number 7, explains what it means to subdue the land by force, "por esfuerzo y fortaleza, así como quebrantando las grandes peñas, y horadando los grandes montes, y allanando los lugares altos y alzando los bajos, y matando los animales bravos y fuertes, aventurándose con ellos para lograr su aprovechamiento" (193). This last admonition, to kill or tame wild animals, makes a good transition to a related subject that invokes similar attitudes toward the natural environment, specifically the mountains, rivers, forest and beasts encountered in the hunt.

Hunting comes up in the *Siete partidas*, in *partida* 2, title 5, law 20, "Cómo el rey debe ser mañoso en cazar", which concludes the arguments in favor of hunting as a proper and healthy sport for kings with a comment that resonates with the other *leyes* cited here dealing with the subjugation of nature and wild animals: "y el placer que en ella [the hunt] recibe es otrosí gran alegría como apoderarse de las aves y de las bestias bravas, y hacerles que le obedezacan y le sirvan, conduciéndole las otras a su mano"

(152). The political undertones are audible in this description of the taming and capture of wild animals, particularly in the use of verbs like "apoderar", "obedecer" and "servir", which all suggest a hierarchical power structure, not unlike the relationship between lord and vassal.[6] Written almost as an aside here in the *Siete partidas*, this last observation about the pleasures of the hunt and domestication of animals is not at all uncommon in treatises dedicated specifically to hunting practices, the breeding of dogs and birds of prey, and surveys of the best forests and streams in Spain for hunters.

In the late fourteenth-century, Pero López de Ayala would write in his *Libro de la caza de las aves* that one of the most impressive achievements of the falconer is that he is able to train a wild bird to hunt other birds that are not its natural prey: "Y que los tales maestros, para hacer esto [hunt birds with falcons], fuesen muy sutiles y muy conocedores de su arte, ya que es bastante sutileza y maravilla que por arte y sabiduría del hombre, un ave tome a otras a las que *por su naturaleza nunca cazara, ni en la manera que se la hacen prender* [my emphasis]" (52). It would seem that hunting, and here specifically falconry, is praised precisely because it exemplifies man's ability to use

[6] Susan Crane uncovers a similar ritualistic representation of aristocratic and divine hierarchies in the hunt *à force* (71). Working in the Iberian world, Jerrilynn Dodds concludes that "[t]he hunt does not just establish authority over the land hunted, it is a reminder of a kind of order, of hunter and hunted, of lord and vassal" (293).

his *arte y sabiduría* to reshape the natural order of things, subjugating nature for his own benefit and pleasure.[7]

In the fifteenth century, the jurist Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo writes in his *Vergel de los príncipes* that hunting is one of the most noble sports for kings, not only because it relaxes the mind, keeps the prince away from the corruption of the court, provides good exercise and practice for war, but also because hunting is at the very root of sovereignty: "que este magnífico e noble exercicio dio comiençó e principio de reinar, que es la más noble e alta cosa que se puede pensar, ca tiene la soberana cunbre de todos los bienes e honores mundanos" (325).[8] Unlike the aside in the *Siete patidas* on the pleasures of the hunt, the political associations between hunting and kingship could not be more explicit here in Arévalo's book. A similar argument is made for hunting in the *Libro de los animales que cazan*, the thirteenth-century translation of the *Libro de Moamín*: "siempre perteneció [hunting] a reyes [. . .] porque siempre amaron maestría de caça, e aquellos que entendíen della, ca assí les conviene porque es una manera de

[7] López Ayala is celebrating in his book what Susan Crane describes as the aristocratic control of nature, which is "an *informed mastery* of the natural world, not just its violent domination [original emphasis]" (76).

[8] Jacques LeGoff oultines the dichotomy between the court, or the world, as a corrupting force, and the forest as a source of "holiness and legitimacy" for kings (58). Arévalo's *Vergel* can be appreciated in the context of what LeGoff describes as a late-medieval revival of "the 'desert' ideal" in medieval culture (59). See also Corinne Saunders for a review of the contrast between forest and city in medieval romance (12).

apoderamiento, e por esso dizen rey, porque á poder sobre muchas cosas, e por vencer todas las cosas ques le quieren defender" (Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Umar al-Bayzār 10). In his review of the *Libro de la caza* and *Libro de la montería*, Dennis Seniff sensed that those books, and I would argue many others like them cited above and the *Libro de los animales que cazan*, all have an "emphasis on power and territorial dominion", and as such, they "convey a clearly-defined ideology of the authority of the monarch and the nobility" (4). From the Book of Genesis, to the *Siete partidas*, and the fifteenth-century *Vergel de los príncipes*, there appears to be a constant theme that links power, subjugation and sovereignty with the hunt and man's domination of the natural world.

I review these texts that deal with man's relationship with nature and the hunt simply to point out that the Biblical view of nature in Genesis, and the idea that it is proper, even pleasurable to domesticate and govern the wild animals, fields, streams and mountains of God's creation was —and I would argue still is— a commonplace in medieval culture and society, so that when we move now to Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*, and Alfonso XI's *Libro de la montería*, we can better appreciate the philosophical and political subtexts in each author's defense of their preferred sport.[9]

Many readers of *Romance Quarterly* will be familiar with the history of Juan Manuel and Alfonso XI, but a few of its most salient events bear repeating here,

[9] Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada's classic essay on medieval municipal ordinances points to the *Libro de la caza* and *Libro de la montería* as sources for medieval imaginings of the hunt as sport, or "actividad lúdica" (193).

especially as they can inform our reading of Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*, and what I will argue is a response to Juan Manuel's book in the *Libro de la montería*. Much of the trouble can be traced to a marriage arranged between Juan Manuel's daughter, Constanza, and Alfonso, which was approved at the Valladolid *Cortes* in 1325 (Sturcken 41). Constanza was possibly betrothed privately to Juan Manuel's ally Juan de Haro "el Tuerto", *señor de Vizcaya*, and some historians argue that the marriage proposed by Alfonso was intended to break up their powerful alliance.[10] In July of 1326, Juan de Haro would be lured to meet with Alfonso in Toro where he was executed; meanwhile, Alfonso was preparing to marry the *infanta* María de Portugal, later annulling his marriage with Constanza and holding her prisoner in Toro.

This episode will mark the beginning of what H. Tracy Sturcken describes as "[a] period of barely controlled hostility between Don Juan and the Castilian king", lasting until Juan Manuel's death (46). Juan Manuel renounced his ties to his king and prepared for open rebellion in 1327, calling on help from friends like lord Jaime de Jérica, Pero Martínez Calvillo, the *alcaide* in Lorca, and even the King of Granada in his war against Alfonso.

One of the most intriguing, and cruel, episodes from this history occurred in November of 1327, when Juan Manuel sent letters destined for Lorca and Granada that

[10] Andrés Giménez Soler felt that the marriage arranged for Costanza and Alfonso was such a cruel plot that the fifteen-year-old monarch could not have planned it himself. He also imagined that Juan Manuel could never have dreamed of such a beneficial marriage for his daughter (77).

were intercepted by Pero López de Ayala's men on the road from Molina. In a letter dated January 10, 1328, Alfonso XI ordered Pero López to cut off the hands and feet of the messengers, and to cut out their eyes before decapitating them for their treason, or *deserviçio* (Giménez Soler 559).[11] The letters themselves, as they were made public "en conçeio general", are published in Andrés Giménez Soler's collection of correspondences included in his biography of Juan Manuel. They are listed as document CCCCL (551–58), and they contain orders from Juan Manuel to his vassal, Pero Martínez in Lorca, to protect the *alcazar*, and to follow Juan Manuel's lead against Alfonso: "Et sabet que por este tuerto tan grand que el Rey me ha fecho que me enbio a despedir e a desnaturar del. Et sobresto astragol e quemol toda su tierra et fagol la mas cruel guerra que puedo" (Giménez Soler 552).[12]

The *cruel guerra* lasted another year, ending with a reunion of the two men in 1329, but the disasters of the war are more clearly documented in a letter of pardon from Alfonso XI sent to the *Conçeio* of Murcia in 1331. The letter is worth citing at some

[11] In Giménez Soler's biography, Alfonso's letter to López de Ayala is document CCCCLII.

[12] It is interesting to note that in these letters Juan Manuel never calls his daughter by name, referring to her as "la Reyna mi fija". It is also clear from the letters that Juan Manuel is not as concerned with the treatment of his daughter, as he is with the loss of his rights and privileges, the *posturas* that were promised to him in his marriage contract with Alfonso, one of them being his rights to the city of Lorca.

length in order to show the influence and power Juan Manuel had, and the extent of the damages he caused in the kingdom:

> Sepades que Don Johan fijo del infant Don Manuel mio vassallo e mio Adelantado mayor de la frontera e del regno de Murcia es abenido conmigo et a mio serviçio. . . . tengo de perdonar a el e a todos los suyos amigos, parientes, vassallos, criados, cavalleros e escuderos e otros qualesquier omnes clerigos o legos xpianos judios o moros varones e mugeres de qualquier estado o qualquier condicion que sean que fueron con el a su vos e en su serviçio e cataron la su Carrera e siguieron su voluntad e fesieron su mandamiento tambien robos como quemas, astragamientos, muertes, cativamientos, redempciones, combatimientos, quebrantamientos como en todo lo al que en uno o apartadamiente dixieron o fesieron contra mi e los mios e contra mio sennorio en poblado o despoblado de omnes o de mugeres o de qualesquier logares o de qualesquier otras cosas en mi tierra o fuera de mi tierra en este bolliçio e en esta guerra. (Giménez Soler 592–93)

Clearly, the war was widespread, and Juan Manuel was known in all the kingdoms of the Peninsula for his treason, or his just war, depending on their point of view. Alfonso XI certainly saw Juan Manuel as a dangerous traitor in his letters to the King of Aragon, who was interceding on Juan Manuel's behalf to arrange a peace agreement. There he calls Juan Manuel disloyal and ungrateful for all the honors bestowed on him: "omne que adaua en nuestro deservicio tan bien en fecho como en dicho . . . non catando en como era nuestro vasallo . . . e quantas merçerdes ouo de los

reyes onde nos venimos" (Giménez Soler 562). In the same letter Alfonso argues that such a man should be exiled for his treason: "tenemos que no es para bevir en el nuestro sennorio ni en otro do verdat e lealtad se deuan a guardar" (Giménez Soler 563). The ties between the two were mended in intervals, as Juan Manuel would break away again from his king in 1336, and make peace the following year.

I call this history to mind to make a simple point: the tensions between Juan Manuel and Alfonso were not private disagreements, family disputes over marriages, or differences of opinion on the subject of nobility, knighthood, and the monarchy; rather, they were open, public battles that cost lives and treasure, and involved all the kingdoms of the Peninsula. That Alfonso and Juan Manuel belonged to two separate, often waring bands, was no secret, and I believe that the enmity between the two is only thinly veiled in Alfonso's book, which offers an ideologically charged rereading of one of Juan Manuel's earliest works.

The date of composition of the *Libro de la caza* is not clear, but most scholars agree with Germán Orduna that it belongs to an early period in Juan Manuel's production, possibly before 1325, but revised at a later date; perhaps even five or ten years later (119). Juan Manuel's biographer, Andrés Giménez Soler, argued that it must have been produced after 1337, after Juan Manuel's second rebellion (174).[13] The date of

[13] Giménez Soler finds it hard to believe that Juan Manuel, an author known for citing his own works, would not have cited his *Libro de la caza* on many occasions in other books where the subjects of hunting and falconry arise. For this reason, among others, Giménez Soler believes that the *Libro de la caza* was composed after the *Conde Lucanor* (174).

composition, while not central to my reading of the *Libro de la caza* here, could inform our understanding of Juan Manuel's comments about the nature and history of falconry as a noble pursuit, inspired in the life and works of his uncle, Alfonso X, "El Sabio", and the later dates would certainly change the reception of the book if it were composed and circulated after the turbulent times with Alfonso XI.

Juan Manuel's treatise is most often cited for its portrait of Alfonso X, as a divinely inspired monarch who tirelessly worked to create and spread wisdom and science, translating works of theology, logic and the seven liberal arts into his native Castilian language. According to the prologue, the Wise King translated all the teachings of the Muslims and Jews, even the mysterious Kabala, to show them the errors of their ways. He translated all the ecclesiastical and secular laws, and as the author exclaims, "Non podría dezir ningún omne quánto bien este noble rrey fizo, sennaladamente en acresçentar et alunbrar el saber" (179). It is in this prologue where we read of Juan Manuel's interest in his uncle's library, particularly its historiographic works and a book described as treating the nature of nobility: "otro libro que fabla de lo que pertenesçe a[l] estado de cauallería" (180).

The function of this panegyric as paratext for a book on hunting is clear when the author aligns the books he read from Alfonso's library, including books on hunting, with his own, defending falconry as a noble pursuit, or more specifically, as *noble*, *apuesta*, *sabrosa* and *provechosa* (179–80). Juan Manuel is not only following in the footsteps of his uncle by composing another book, he places himself in a direct line of descendants — descendants that are also expert falconers— reaching back to the wisdom and legitimate authority of the Wise King. He has inherited his uncle's knowledge, both in theory and in

practice, and is himself a source of authority that can stand in judgement of changing traditions:

> [Et por] lo que él (non) sabe que se usa en esta arte; et lo que oyó dezir al infante don Johan, que fue muy grant caçador, et a falconeros que fueron del rrey don Alfonso et del infante don Manuel, su padre, cómmo se usava quando ellos eran bivos, que eran muy grandes caçadores, tovo que él vio cómmo se mudó la manera de la caça de aquel tiempo fasta (que) éste que agora está. (180)

Here Juan Manuel inserts himself into the history and genealogy of the falconer princes of Spain, as both practitioner and observer, and in so doing the painting he began of his uncle, Alfonso "el Sabio", morphs into a self-portrait of Juan Manuel himself by the end of the prologue.

The family resemblance takes on even more poignancy for Juan Manuel's contemporaries when the reader recalls a cryptic prayer that follows the review of Alfonso's translation project, beginning with "¡O Dios, padre et criador et poderoso et sabidor sobre todas las cosas!", and ending with an allusion to God's judgment, or perhaps even punishment, of Alfonso at the end of his reign as king of Castilla: "Et marabillosos et derechureros son los [tus] juyzios; et marabilloso fue el que vino contra este tan noble rrey. Tú, sennor, sabes lo que feziste. Bendito seas tú por quanto feziste et quanto fazes et por quanto farás" (179). This divine "juyzio" seems to point clearly to Alfonso's son, Sancho, and his rebellion against his father for the throne, and thus recalls the questionable legitimacy of Sancho's descendants, including his grandson, King Alfonso XI.

It would be tempting to press this reading of the prologue further, but I believe there is enough here to suggest, at least, that Juan Manuel frames his study of falconry within the context of the competing discourses surrounding the nature of nobility, the legitimacy of the monarchy, and possibly even the open conflict between Alfonso XI and Juan Manuel. I will return, briefly, to the *Libro de la caza*, and what I would call its ornithocratic ideology, in my conclusion, and as it relates to Alfonso XI's *Libro de la montería,* where the author, or authors enter the debate on hounds or hawks.

The *Libro de la montería* was most likely composed after Juan Manuel's death in 1348. According to one modern editor, Dennis Seniff, it was written soon after his death, in the early 1350s. Seniff has also hinted at the possibility that Juan Manuel's book served as an intertext and inspiration for Alfonso's hunting manual (298). Some of Alfonso's arguments against falconry do seem to recall Juan Manuel's descriptions of the pleasures of the hunt, but there is one argument in particular that could call to mind Juan Manuel's rejection of his place in Alfonso's kingdom and political worldview.

The book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the hunter's equipment and tack, and the dogs used in hunting, particularly *sabuessos* (a senthound) and *alanos* (the Spanish bull dog, which is a kind of mastiff); how to raise them, and even how to improve the breed. The second section is a veterinary treatise on the treatment of illnesses, like rabies; cures for injuries, "feridas" and "quebranturas" and "melezinas de todas las dolencias" (2), and the last section describes the best mountains throughout Castilla, León, and Granada for hunting. As in the *Libro de la caza,* it is in the prologue and introductory chapter where we find the defense of hunting as a noble sport; it is "la mas noble, et la mayor, et la mas alta, et la mas cauallerosa, et de mayor placer" (2). In

total, the *Libro de la montería* outlines six arguments in favor of the superior nobility and pleasure in hunting game, particularly deer and boar, with dogs, as opposed to hunting with birds of prey.

The first, and most forceful argument is that dogs hunt by nature, not through coercion or training. As part of God's creation, *alanos* obey the divine order when they hunt deer: "que todo lo que fazen en su oficio, lo fazen por naturaleza e omezillo que puso Dios entre ellos e los venados" (3). They do not hunt for a reward, or because they have been starved, or forced in any other (unnatural) way, unlike falcons:

> Ca çierta cosa es, et non se puede negar, que [fol. 33v] toda la bondat que fazen las aues en sus caças, commo quier que les viene algo dello por naturaleza, que lo fazen con premia de enmagresçer las, et de muy grant fanbre, et de dar les malas noches et malas mañanas, et trabajando mucho con ellas. Et aun con todo esto fazen algunas dellas muy grandes maldades, por de buenos plumages que sean (3).

The implication is clear that those who hunt with falcons, no matter how fine their feathers (or how noble their lineage), are doing violence to the natural order, and are themselves less noble for their rebellion. I will return to this argument, but the other five can be summarized quickly.

Another reason hunting with dogs is more noble, more "cavalleroso", is that the quarry is better: "quando la presión es mayor, tanto es la caça mayor. Et çierto es que mayor presion es vn venado que vna aue" (3). As an aside, I must say that I do not think this argument would have held much water. Based on my own readings on medieval and early modern food ways, I think that fourteenth-century aristocratic foodies would have

viewed a heron or crane —the birds Juan Manuel prizes most in his *Libro de la caza*— as a high prestige dish. There is no doubt that many types of fowl —birds that many today would never dream of eating, such as bitterns, herons, cranes, swans, and song birds— were hunted and prepared for food. There are recipes in Bartolomeo Scappi's cookbook from 1570 on how to roast cranes and herons (209); Enrique de Villena describes the elaborate presentation and carving of a *pavón* in his *Arte cisoria*, and concludes by saying that one can prepare a crane or heron in the same way (126); Teresa Castro Martínez, in *La alimentación en las crónicas castellanas bajomedievales* claims that fowl was "la más valorada de todas las carnes, al menos entre la nobleza" (267). In her new book, *Food Matters*, Carolyn Nadeau has an entire chapter dedicated to poultry as signifier of prestige,[14] and John Cummins points out that small birds were delicacies, and that cranes and herons "provided meat for the table" (204). According to one of his sources, the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* (Latin translation of Ibn Butlan of Baghdad's *Taqwīm as-siḥḥah*), cranes hunted with falcons were the best (204).

A third argument in favor of hunting is that it is more fit for a knight, since he can hunt on horseback, armed as if for battle: "por que anda de cauallo et trae arma en la mano" (3). This idea leads to the next, perhaps most common defense of the benefits of hunting; namely, that it is a surrogate for war. Hunting is like war in that it is costly, the huntsman must be able to ride and bear arms, withstand the elements, and overcome his

[14] Chapter Six, "'Algún palomino de añadidura los domingos': The Theatrics of Food and Celebration". See particularly the subsection on "Poultry as a Signifier of Prestige" (163–69).

fear in battle. Finally, hunting with hounds is more pleasurable because it requires physical exertion, unlike the falconer who simply watches his bird, and the chase also lasts longer than hunting with falcons.

It is interesting to note that some of these same features of the hunt are found in the *Libro de la caza*. Juan Manuel also argues that the longer a hunt lasts, the more pleasurable it is, and for this reason he recommends hunting cranes, herons and ducks with falcons rather than hawks, because usually the falcon takes longer to kill its prey; drowning it, and tearing it, using "muchos colpes estrannos et marabillosos, en que los omnes toman muy grant plazer" (183). Juan Manuel's book also seems to affirm the idea, also found in the *Livres du Roy Modus et de La Royne Ratio*, cited above, that the pleasure in hunting with falcons is primarily visual, although he also delights in the excitement and sounds of the men and dogs rushing to help their birds (183). But as colorful as these descriptions of the hunt are, it is the first argument against falconry in the *Libro de la montería* to which I want to return.

The claim that falconry is unnatural, even sinful because it denies God's order of creation, is at once a realistic description of how birds of prey were trained to hunt, often for animals they would not naturally kill, like a crane or heron, and an attack against a discourse of power and enlightened sovereignty that was associated symbolically with falconry in the medieval Mediterranean world. A central feature of the political and philosophical worldview associated with falconry, as Daniella Boccassini argues in her book *Il volo de la mente*, is the transformative power of taming that is symbolically and literally practiced in falconry (168; 199–200). Studying the example of the most famous imperial falconer of the thirteenth century, Ferderick II, Boccassini shows how the falcon

and the falconer came to symbolize a transformed, enlightened nobility whose wisdom and authority was acquired through the act of taming —taming of the natural world and of the self— more so than directly acquired from above ("Falconry as a Transmutative Art" 164).

Returning to Juan Manuel's *Libro de la caza*, it is precisely the selection, breeding, and taming of birds, and the kind of "entendimiento" that experienced falconers deploy in the hunt that stands out in the book. Falconry involves a total psychosomatic discipline and dedication to the care and training of raptors that leads to the subjugation of nature to the will of the falconer. This view of the falconer as master of the natural world is in line with the medieval imagination of man's relationship with nature found in the Book of Genesis, the *Siete partidas*, and other works dedicated to hunting and nobility cited above, but it also appears to stand at odds with the complaint against falconry in Alfonso's *Libro de la montería*.

The argument that falconry is less noble because it is less "natural", turns the medieval imagination of man and God's creation on its head. In Alfonso's book, nature is not subjugated by man, but rather its divine order is obeyed and protected. Whether or not this view of the natural world and man's sovereignty in the *Libro de la montería* is an outlier in comparison with a more mainstream, Biblical view of man's authority over the animals and lands entrusted to him, is a subject for further investigation. I believe we can safely conclude, however, that since both Alfonso XI and Juan Manuel, like so many other aristocrats of their time, were avid hunters, practicing both forms, that these debates over hunting with hounds and falcons are used rhetorically to defend a political and ideological position, rather than to defend any real preference for one kind of hunting

over the other.[15]

In what way, then, might this understanding of falconry align with Juan Manuel's views on nobility and the monarchy? Is the image of the tamed falcon on the fist an expression of Juan Manuel's self-fashioning in the form of a sovereign Castilian nobleman, descendent of the last legitimate king of Castilla; a "rico hombre" —as Jesús Rodríguez Velasco has written— "que no sólo se considera par del rey, sino también, seguramente, único miembro legítimo en la genealogía regia para poder ser coronado" (50)? We should recall here that Aníbal Biglieri has answered some of these questions in his reading of *ejemplo* 33 of the *Conde Lucanor* in *Hacia una poética del relato didáctico,* where he concludes that the falcon does not represent Juan Manuel himself, but rather his view of his entire estate: "es el símbolo de todo el estamento caballeresco" (208). A final question would be How might the *Libro de la montería* translate the discourse of hunting into a model of Alfonso XI's centralizing monarchy, where all the dogs are loyal to their masters and remain in their preordained stations? There are still many more questions to ask about these competing and overlapping discourses, and I am convinced that we do not take these manuals as seriously as their elite medieval audiences did, but I hope we can conclude that a closer reading of what appears to be a literary convention on the surface —the debate between huntsman and falconer— can

[15] Isabel Beceiro Pita has argued that falconry was more popular in Spain than in other countries, and "muy por encima de otras artes como la montería". She concludes that it became the favorite sport among the nobility of Spain (77).

uncover how authors used the arts of the medieval hunt as a symbolic discourse to position themselves in contingent and volatile political arenas.

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